

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00
XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-04 CEA-01
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P 242321Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2914
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS(BY POUCH)

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 01954

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION WITH AN INDEPENDENT
QUEBEC?

REF: A) MONTREAL 484; B) TORONTO 647

1. INCREASINGLY, CONCEPT OF "ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION"
BETWEEN AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC AND REST OF CANADA IS
BECOMING CENTRAL IN BATTLE OF WORDS BETWEEN PARTI
QUEBECOIS (PQ) REPS AND FEDERALISTS, NOTABLY PRIME MINISTER
TRUDEAU.

2. AS REPORTED IN PARA 3 REFTTEL B, QUEBEC FINANCE MIN-
ISTER PARIZEAU RECENTLY ARGUED TO TORONTO BUSINESS
AUDIENCE THAT POST-INDEPENDENCE ASSOCIATION AN ECONOMIC
NECESSITY TO ONTARIO AND MARITIME PROVINCES. LATER, AS
NOTED IN REF A, PREMIER LEVESQUE GAVE SPECIAL ATTENTION
TO ASSOCIATION QUESTION IN MONTREAL STAR INTERVIEW,
CLAIMING "SECRET POLLS" SHOWED MAJORITY OF CANADIANS
FAVOR ASSOCIATION WITH QUEBEC, IF IT BECOMES INDEPENDENT.
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3. TRUDEAU, FOR HIS PART, HAS REPEATEDLY ARGUED PQ CAN-
NOT HAVE ITS CAKE AND EAT IT TOO AND REST OF CANADA MAY
BE UNWILLING TO NEGOTIATE ASSOCIATION AFTER TRAUMA OF
QUEBEC'S OPTING OUT OF CONFEDERATION. MOST RECENTLY,
AT MARCH 10 PRESS CONFERENCE, TRUDEAU STATED "I THINK HE
IS MAKING A SERIOUS MISTAKE IF HE THINKS HE HAS TO GET

INDEPENDENCE FIRST AND THEN AN ASSOCIATION...WE WILL NOT UNDERTAKE TO NEGOTIATE WITH A SEPARATE QUEBEC SO IF MR. LEVESQUE THINKS THAT HE IS GOING TO SEPARATE AND THEN HE IS GOING TO FIND A LOT OF PEOPLE VERY HAPPY TO RENEGOTIATE WITH HIM, I THINK HE IS WRONG."

4. COMMENT: REASON FOR IMPORTANCE THIS CONCEPT AND CONSEQUENT VEHEMENCE WITH WHICH PROTAGONISTS ARGUE POINT IS OBVIOUS. AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC, ON ITS OWN AND ECONOMICALLY ISOLATED FROM REST OF CANADA, IS PRESUMABLY A FRIGHTENING PROSPECT FOR MANY QUEBECOIS, PARTICULARLY UNCOMMITTED MODERATES WHOSE VOTES WILL BE CRITICAL TO SUCCESS OF PQ REFERENDUM. AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC WITH ECONOMIC TIES WITH NEIGHBORING ONTARIO AND ATLANTIC PROVINCES CONVERSELY SHOULD BE FAR MORE PALATABLE TO MODERATE ELECTORATE. ASSOCIATION CONCEPT, IN SHORT, SHOULD BE IMPORTANT, INDEED PERHAPS EVEN DETERMINATIVE IN BATTLE FOR SUPPORT OF UNCOMMITTED QUEBECOIS. ENDERS

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